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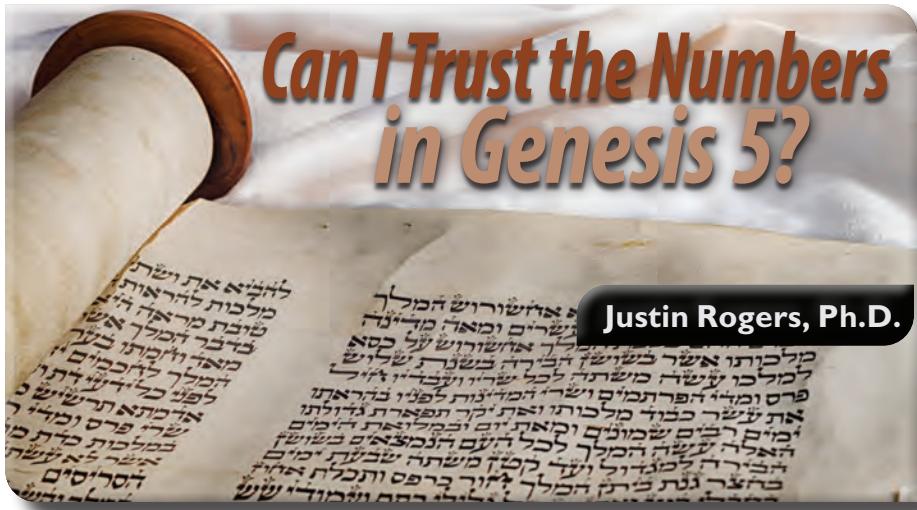
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# Principles for UNDERSTANDING God's Will

Can I **Trust**  
**NUMBERS** in  
**Genesis 5?**



**[EDITOR'S NOTE:** AP auxiliary writer Dr. Rogers is the Director of the Graduate school of Theology and Associate Professor of Bible at Freed-Hardeman University. He holds an M.A. in New Testament from Freed-Hardeman University as well as an M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Hebraic, Judaic, and Cognate Studies from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.]

The numbers in Genesis 5 have long raised challenges for readers of Scripture. The most obvious problem is with the surprisingly long lifespans recorded of ancient humanity. Many moderns simply find it difficult to believe anyone could live for 900 years! So that raises questions about the basic credibility of the Bible, or at least of the primeval history (Genesis 1-11).<sup>1</sup> But Genesis 5 presents a more nuanced issue that does not appear obvious to readers of the Bible in modern translation. Because the standard modern-language versions translate the Masoretic Hebrew text primarily if not entirely, modern readers have no idea that the ancient translations vary quite strikingly in the numbers they provide. Before we begin our

analysis of the situation, we might offer a brief word on the nature of the evidence. Then we will address the textual variations in Genesis 5.

### THE MASORETIC HEBREW TEXT

The Hebrew Bible is extraordinarily ancient. The earliest parts were composed according to internal evidence as early as 1400 B.C. and the most recent around 430 B.C. This means the recovery of any original manuscript is all but hopeless. Indeed, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls was a remarkable peek into fragments of the biblical text as old as the third century B.C. However, not enough remains from the Dead Sea Scrolls for us to compile a complete Hebrew Bible.<sup>2</sup> This means we are reliant on the Masoretic Text. The Masoretic Text is very close to that of the Dead Sea Scrolls in many cases, and was probably standardized among the rabbis after the time of the New Testament. One confirmation is Jerome's Latin Vulgate translation of the Hebrew Bible (A.D. 390-410), which reflects with few significant variants the Masoretic Text.

### THE SEPTUAGINT

The “Septuagint” is the name assigned among ancient authors to the Greek translation of the Old Testament, although this is a misnomer. The term *septuaginta* in Latin means “70,” and the number comes from the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century B.C. *Letter of Aristeas* which reports that 70 Jewish translators (or 72) were sent from Jerusalem to Alexandria, Egypt for the purpose of translating the Pentateuch. Ptolemy II (reigned 283-246 B.C.) requested the translation because he wanted the best books in the world contained in the library of Alexandria. Aristeas, however, speaks only of the Pentateuch (not the rest of the books), and modern scholars find Aristeas' narrative fanciful and unreliable (the Hebrew scroll from which the Septuagint was translated was written with letters of gold, for example). It is now widely believed that the entirety of the Old Testament was translated into Greek sometime between the third and first centuries B.C. although we do not know where, why, and by whom.

### THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH

The Samaritan community (which still exists today) produced its own Pentateuch, which is the only part of the Hebrew Bible it regards as sacred. Like the Masoretic Text, whose earliest manuscript dates to the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the Abisha Scroll is the earliest preserved text of the Samaritan Pentateuch, and it dates no earlier than the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It is commonly claimed that 6,000 differences exist between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the

**TABLE I. LIFESPANS OF PATRIARCHS IN GENESIS 5**

PERSON	MASORETIC HEBREW <sup>4</sup>	SEPTUAGINT	SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH <sup>5</sup>
Adam	$130 + 800 = 930$ years	<b><math>230 + 700 = 930</math></b> years	$130 + 800 = 930$ years
Seth	$105 + 807 = 912$ years	<b><math>205 + 707 = 912</math></b> years	$105 + 807 = 912$ years
Enosh	$90 + 815 = 905$ years	<b><math>190 + 715 = 905</math></b> years	$90 + 815 = 905$ years
Kenan	$70 + 840 = 910$ years	<b><math>170 + 740 = 910</math></b> years	$70 + 840 = 910$ years
Mahalalel	$65 + 830 = 895$ years	<b><math>165 + 730 = 895</math></b> years	$65 + 830 = 895$ years
Jared	$162 + 800 = 962$ years	$162 + 800 = 962$ years	<b><math>62 + 785 = 847</math></b> years
Enoch	$65 + 300 = 365$ years <sup>6</sup>	<b><math>165 + 200 = 365</math></b> years	$65 + 300 = 365$ years
Methuselah	$187 + 782 = 969$ years	<b><math>167 + 802 = 969</math></b> years	<b><math>67 + 653 = 720</math></b> years
Lamech	$182 + 595 = 777$ years	<b><math>188 + 565 = 753</math></b> years	<b><math>53 + 600 = 653</math></b> years

Masoretic Text, but most of these are spelling variations and other minor variants. The Samaritan Pentateuch does, however, include explicit information that squares with its own theology against traditional Jewish doctrine, such as a command to worship on Mount Gerizim (cf. John 4:20). The Dead Sea Scrolls sometimes support readings that match the Samaritan Pentateuch in contrast with the Masoretic Text (although about a third of these match the Septuagint as well). This suggests that the Samaritan community sometimes preserves an ancient Hebrew recension<sup>3</sup> transmitted in no other textual tradition.

### COMPARING THE EVIDENCE

The three textual traditions we have discussed all receive support from different manuscripts and biblical quotations found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, although the Masoretic Text is clearly the most dominant. Therefore, it is important for scholars to compare and contrast the ancient evidence in order to arrive at the earliest text. Much of the time

such comparisons yield clear results. But in the case of Genesis 5 it is more complicated. The textual traditions disagree in many cases. The situation is further complicated by the unfortunate fact that the biblical manuscripts discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls yielded no information sufficient for analysis in relation to the numbers of Genesis 5.

Table 1 offers a quick glance at the three texts. I take the Masoretic Hebrew as standard. Differences from the Masoretic Hebrew are noted in bold.

Several observations are in order. First, note that the Masoretic Hebrew and the Samaritan versions are largely in agreement. In only **three places** do we find discrepancies (Jared, Methuselah, and Lamech). Second, note that the Septuagint never agrees with the Samaritan version. This suggests no textual relationship between the two. It is true that the Septuagint agrees with the Hebrew version in its entirety only once. However, in every case except one, the disagreements concern the lesser numbers

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(the age of the patriarch at the birth of his first child plus the number of years from that point to his death). The Septuagint's totals of the patriarchal lifespans are identical with the Masoretic Text (except with Lamech). Third, note that the ancient versions do not solve the alleged problem of the extreme ages of the patriarchs. The three differences in the Samaritan Pentateuch do in fact reduce the ages of three patriarchs, but is it any more believable that Methuselah, for example, lived to the age of 720 as opposed to 969?

### HOW DID THE TEXTUAL CORRUPTION OCCUR?

A quick scan of the chart above obviously invites the question of textual corruption. All the texts cannot be right since they disagree. So which one is right, and how do we know? This question is impossible to answer with certainty, but perhaps we can offer a tentative explanation of how the corruption may have come to be.

First, according to our most ancient evidence (from Egypt and

Babylonia), numbers were written pictographically. That is, numbers were symbols. This should not seem strange to us since the modern Arabic numerals are also symbols (1,2,3, etc.). Most ancient Near Eastern systems simply used tally marks for the first nine numbers ( $1 = |$ ,  $2 = ||$ ,  $3 = |||$ , etc.). So to count 1–9 one needed simply to count tallies. The symbols change from there but the principle remains the same. In Hieroglyphic, for example,  $\sqcap$  is 10, but  $\sqcap\sqcap$  20,  $\sqcap\sqcap\sqcap$  30, and so on. The symbol changes again at 100, but the pattern repeats. Although symbolic variations exist among the various Near Eastern languages, the basic principles pretty well hold. This means by simply miscounting symbols, a scribe could be off by factors of 10 or even 100.

Most of the variations in the table above between the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text can be accounted for by a single scribe miscounting a single symbol. Of the Septuagint's 17 differences, all but five can be attributed to miscounting a symbol for 100. This is a reduction of the variation over 70%! Although the

numerical writing system does not account for every difference, it greatly reduces the number of variants.

Second, even after numbers are spelled in full, they remain subject to corruption in ancient manuscripts (not just the Bible). For example, no one today writes "one thousand and five hundred and eighty-seven." Reading that number is much more confusing than reading "1,587." Likewise, in ancient Hebrew one reads "two ten years and nine hundred years" in Seth's case (912 years). Even assuming the numbers were initially transcribed accurately from the original, they could easily have been corrupted in the later manuscript tradition. The fact that the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint reflect greater variation toward the end of the patriarchal list may indicate scribal fatigue. The need to copy laboriously one number after the other may help to explain **some** of the problems in the transmission of numbers in Genesis 5.



## WHICH TEXT DO WE BELIEVE?

While all ancient evidence of the text of Scripture is important, not all evidence is to be weighed equally. As a Greek translation, the Septuagint is one step removed from the Hebrew it translates. Since we do not have the manuscripts from which the Septuagint was translated, we cannot always know when the Septuagint reflects a different Hebrew text or when the translator(s) has made a mistake. The Samaritan Pentateuch has the advantage of being a Hebrew text that traces its lineage back to a very ancient textual tradition. But the Masoretic (or proto-Masoretic) Text is far more prominent among the Dead Sea Scrolls than the Samaritan version. This indicates the Samaritan tradition may be based on a fringe text considered inferior by the majority of Jews. Finally, the judgment of basically all English Bible translators since Jerome is not likely to be wrong. They have elected not to follow the Septuagint or the Samaritan Pentateuch for good reason. It is for good reason that the Masoretic Text is taken as the standard base for virtually all mainstream translations of the Old Testament.

## CONCLUSION

The reader must keep in mind that all discussions concerning scribal errors and variations among manuscripts of the Bible may leave the impression that the text has been so corrupted that we cannot know God's Word. This misimpression is understandable since textual criticism tends to focus on alleged prob-

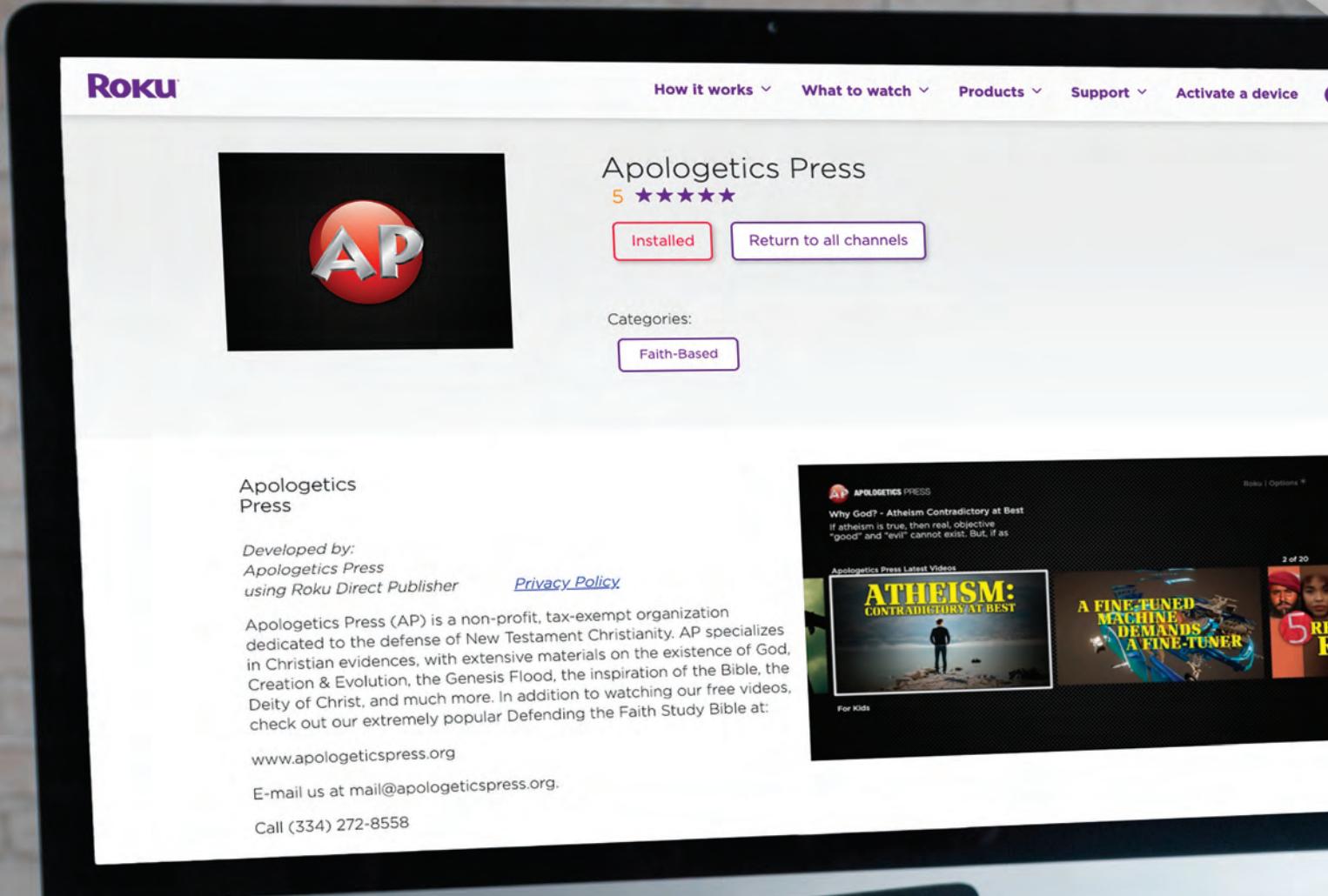
lems of transmission and to ignore the remarkable accuracy with which the Bible has been copied. Hebrew scholar Bruce Waltke stresses that "in every era there was a strong tendency to preserve the text,"<sup>7</sup> and that about "95 percent" of the Old Testament text is sound.<sup>8</sup> If Waltke is correct, then textual critics deal only with about 5% of cases, and most of these involve problems that are easily solved.

I will conclude with an illustration. I can consult with many medical doctors, all of whom have legitimate education and licenses. But when it comes to a rare medical condition, surely I do not assume all doctors speak with equal authority. I respect the opinions of every medical professional, but I go to the Mayo Clinic for a reason: the treatment is generally regarded as better. The doctors are better educated and better able to diagnose and treat rare conditions. The numbers in Genesis 5 happen to be a rare case. It is unusual to find so much textual variation in the ancient evidence. In order to "heal" the differences in the text, I prefer to consult the textual tradition that is (1) oldest and (2) with the longest track record of trustworthiness. The Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch are valuable textual traditions that ought to be respected. But they do not deserve the weight accorded the Masoretic Text. So, in the case of the numbers in Genesis 5, we cannot explain every variant (although we can give reasonable explanations for most). And all the numbers are extraordinarily high,

at least from a modern perspective. Yet the Masoretic tradition deserves to be followed. You **can** trust your English translation.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See Appendix 2 in *Creation Compromises* (2000), (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, second edition), pp. 357ff., [http://apologeticspress.org/pdfs/e-books\\_pdf/cre\\_comp.pdf](http://apologeticspress.org/pdfs/e-books_pdf/cre_comp.pdf).
- <sup>2</sup> On the Dead Sea Scrolls see Justin Rogers (2019), "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible," *Reason & Revelation*, 39[11]:122-125,128-131, <http://apologeticspress.org/apPubPage.aspx?pub=1&issue=1307>.
- <sup>3</sup> A "recension" is a critical revision of an earlier text.
- <sup>4</sup> Most mainstream translations of the English Bible follow the Masoretic Hebrew closely.
- <sup>5</sup> I translate the Masoretic text and the Septuagint myself. I take the translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch from Benjamin Tsedaka, ed. (2013), *The Israelite Samaritan Version of the Torah: First English Translation Compared with the Masoretic Version* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).
- <sup>6</sup> All the ancient versions explain Enoch's rather modest age as a result of the fact that "God took him" (i.e., he did not die).
- <sup>7</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, "How We Got the Hebrew Bible: The Text and Canon of the Old Testament," pp. 27-50 in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation*, edited by Peter W. Flint (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001; the exact reference quoted here is found on p. 47).
- <sup>8</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, "Old Testament Textual Criticism," pp. 156-86 in *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation*, edited by David S. Dockery, Kenneth A. Matthews, and R. Sloan (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994; the exact reference quoted here is found on p. 158).



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# *Principles in the Old Testament For Understanding God's Will*

Dave Miller, Ph.D.



One of the attributes of God is His rational nature. God is inherently logical, rational, and reasonable. He is a God of truth. He created humans in His own image, which includes this same rational nature. The human mind was created by God to function rationally. God's communication to humanity presupposes this feature. The Bible was written in human language, and it was written in such a way that it assumes that its intended meanings may be understood correctly. In fact, within the Bible itself, beginning in the Old Testament, are found the hermeneutical principles by which the reader may understand the intended meanings. These principles are not "new" principles, developed by modern scholars, and unable to be known and utilized by ancient man. Rather, they were embedded in the Old Testament thousands of years ago for all who are willing to dig deeply enough into God's Word to discover them.

This section summarizes six key principles apparent in the Old Testament that are indispensable to properly understanding

the Bible. Many Bible passages demand that the reader of the Bible apply simple-but-necessary principles of interpretation in order to arrive at the meaning God intended.

## **PRINCIPLE I: ABSOLUTE TRUTH IS ATTAINABLE**

Absolute, objective truth exists and can be known. The human mind can come to a knowledge of that truth. The Old Testament everywhere assumes that humans can and must come to the knowledge of absolute truth. Solomon said to "buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding" (Proverbs 23:23). Both Isaiah and Jeremiah affirmed that people can, and must, be taught in order to come to knowledge of those things that must be known (Isaiah 54:13; Jeremiah 31:34; cf. John 6:45; 7:17). Moses stressed to the Israelites that it would be absolutely imperative for them to teach their children those things that would be necessary to please God (Deuteronomy 6:1-9). Moses also explained that the purpose of the desert hardships was to make

the Israelites "know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 8:3). If all of life is to be governed by the words that proceed from God, humans are capable of comprehending those words and coming to a correct understanding of what is required of them.

Moses further pointed out that "the secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29). Certainly, there are many things that humans cannot know—things far beyond our limited capability to understand (Romans 11:33). However, God has revealed certain truths that we are well capable of grasping, and that God expects us to comprehend. These truths "belong" to us. That is, they are directed to us, and we will be held accountable for our reaction to them. Sadly, many people dwell on matters that cannot be fully known, while they neglect those things for which they will be held responsible in eternity. No wonder God frequently issued warnings against being ignorant, uninformed, or resistant to knowing (Isaiah 1:3; 5:13; Jeremiah 9:6; Hosea 4:6).

Solomon observed that the words of God's wisdom "are all plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge" (Proverbs 8:9). His wisdom claims that "those who seek me diligently will find me" (Proverbs 8:17). Could Adam and Eve **know** whether it was permissible for them to eat

the fruit (Genesis 3:3:1)? Could Cain **know** what sacrifice God expected (Genesis 4:5)? Could Moses **know** whether he should speak to or strike the rock (Numbers 20:8-11)? These instances demonstrate that the perennial problem with humanity is not the ability to come to knowledge of God's Word; rather, the consistent problem is the will and the desire to conform. Many other passages leave no doubt that God has a body of truth that He has made available to mankind, and He expects every person to use mental faculties and cognitive powers to understand that truth.

### **PRINCIPLE 2: LOGICAL REASONING IS REQUIRED**

The Old Testament also conveys the idea that in order to arrive at God's truth, correct reasoning must be employed. Isaiah quoted God's statement to the nation: "Come now, and let us reason together" (1:18). God later said: "Put Me in remembrance; let us contend together; state your case, that you may be acquitted" (43:26). In his farewell address to the nation, Samuel declared: "Now therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord" (1 Samuel 12:7). Solomon insisted that "the first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him" (Proverbs 18:17). He also said, "the simple believes every word, but the prudent man considers well his steps" (Proverbs 14:15). We must use our God-given rationality to think clearly,

accurately, and logically in our treatment of Scripture, as well as in sorting out the daily affairs of life. These passages teach that we both can, and must, ascertain the correct meaning of Scripture through the proper exercise of our reasoning powers.

### **PRINCIPLE 3: DILIGENT EFFORT MUST BE EXPENDED**

The task of learning what God wants us to know requires considerable effort. We must be willing to expend the time and trouble to carefully, prayerfully, and diligently analyze and examine God's words. Moses underscored this principle in his remarks to the Israelites on the plains of Moab just prior to their entrance into the Land of Canaan. He described the task as requiring constant, consistent attention:

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them **diligently** to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

Solomon referred to the attentiveness required to remain true to God: "My son, keep your father's command, and do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them **continually** upon your heart; tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you

awake, they will speak with you" (Proverbs 6:20-22). This attentiveness must include an intense desire to pursue, know, and acquire truth—like the psalmist who wanted God's laws so badly that he could almost taste them (Psalm 19:10). It was to be sought after more than fine gold (Psalm 19:10; 119:127). Most people are simply too busy, or unwilling, to expend effort to such an intensity. Life has too many distractions, and offers too many other interests. But the Bible makes clear that if we wish to understand God's will for our lives, then arduous, persistent, aggressive effort is essential to know and do that will.

### **PRINCIPLE 4: BEWARE OF FALSE INTERPRETATION**

A fourth principle found in the Bible is that we must recognize that there are incorrect interpretations and that we are capable of distinguishing the correct from the incorrect. False teachers actually do exist who misrepresent God's Word and deceive people with incorrect interpretations. God, through Jeremiah, warned the nation: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:16). Think of the many con men and shysters throughout Bible history who sought to lead God's people astray—from Pharaoh's magicians (Exodus 7:11; 2 Timothy 3:8) and Ahab and Jezebel's prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:19), to Zedekiah (1 Kings 22:11,24) and Hananiah

(Jeremiah 28). God expected people to see through their charades and their erroneous ideologies, and to recognize the pure Word of God.

So it is clear that the Old Testament warns of false interpretations and misrepresentations of God's Word. In God's sight, there is only the truth on the one hand, and various departures from that truth on the other hand. All people are required to distinguish between truth and error, and to cling to the truth. "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

#### PRINCIPLE 5: REMAIN WITHIN SCRIPTURAL PARAMETERS

The Bible also teaches that the interpreter must remain within the framework of Scripture, neither adding to nor subtracting from the written revelation. Moses declared in the long ago: "You shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32). Solomon said: "Every word of God is pure... add not to His words, least He reprove you, and you be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:5-6). Jeremiah urged: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it" (Jeremiah 6:16). In other words, the individual is responsible for identifying the limits of God's

directives, and then confining himself to those directives. These passages make clear that God has defined the parameters of moral, spiritual, and religious truth for humanity. He expects us to confine ourselves to His instructions in our thinking and practice.

The Old Testament is riddled with instances of people failing to conform themselves precisely to the instructions given to them by God. Cain was neither an atheist nor a reprobate. He, in fact, was a religious individual who was willing to engage in religious worship. He was also to be commended for directing his worship behavior toward the right God. Nevertheless, his slight adjustment in the specifics of worship action evoked God's displeasure (Genesis 4:5; 1 John 3:12). Nadab and Abihu were the right men, at the right time, at the right place, with the right censers, and the right incense. Yet by using the wrong fire, they were destroyed by God (Leviticus 10:1-2). King Saul was censured twice for his unauthorized actions (1 Samuel 13:11-13; 15:19-24). Uzzah was struck dead simply for touching the Ark of the Covenant, though his apparent motive was to protect the Ark (2 Samuel 6:7). David later identified the problem by saying it happened "because we did not consult Him (God) about the proper order" (1 Chronicles 15:13). God's previous instructions on the matter were not followed as they should have been.

Remaining within the framework of Scripture requires a proper recognition of the role of the "silence" of the Scriptures. A misunderstanding occurs in two ways: (1) some reason that if the Bible is silent concerning a particular practice (and therefore does not explicitly condemn it), they are free to engage in that practice; (2) others reason that if the Bible does not mention a practice, then they are not free to engage in that practice. But neither of these viewpoints accounts adequately for the biblical picture.

The Bible may not expressly mention a given item, and yet authorize its use. For example, Noah was told to construct a boat, without being given all of the details about how to do so (Genesis 6:14). He was authorized to achieve the task using a variety of carpentry tools. God's silence on this particular point therefore was **permissive**. On the other hand, God did not explicitly forbid using poplar, cedar, or ash. Rather, He specified "gopherwood." God's silence was therefore restrictive in this case.

Two further examples illustrate this principle. God did not explicitly forbid Nadab and Abihu from using fire from some other source than the one divinely specified. He simply told them what fire they were to use. Use of fire from any other source was an **unauthorized** act, meaning it had not received God's prior approval. The text says that they "offered profane fire before the Lord, **which He had not com-**

**manded them**" (Leviticus 10:1). It was not that God had told them **not** to do so; it was that He had not told them **to do** it.

In like manner, when Joshua received instructions from God regarding the proper tactics to be used in conquering the city of Jericho, God spoke in a **positive** fashion, specifying what they were to **do**. He did not tell them what they were **not** to do. The instructions included the act of shouting when the trumpet was sounded (Joshua 6:3-5). However, Joshua—who obviously understood the principle of remaining within the confines of God's instructions, and grasped the concept of restrictive silence—relayed God's instructions to the nation by offering further clarification: "Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, 'You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout'" (Joshua 6:10-11). Joshua understood that things could be forbidden by God—not because He explicitly forbade them—but because He simply gave no authority to do them. With diligent and honest study, we, too, can settle questions of interpretation and authority.

#### PRINCIPLE 6: MAINTAIN A RECEPTIVE ATTITUDE

That brings us to a sixth principle for understanding the Bible. We must have the right mindset, the right attitude, a genuine desire to know the will of God,

and an honest heart to accept the truth, no matter how difficult the demands of that truth might be. Solomon noted that "a wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel" (Proverbs 1:5). "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning" (Proverbs 9:9). These passages make clear that we cannot go to Scripture with the ulterior motive of getting our way or proving our position. We must be eager to learn from Scripture what the Lord intended for us to learn. We must not be like Jeremiah's contemporaries who defiantly asserted: "We will not walk therein" and "We will not listen" (6:16-17).

#### CONCLUSION

This extremely brief discussion of interpretation principles that are evident in the Old Testament is certainly not intended to be complete. But it shows how the Old Testament contains within itself principles by which its truth

may be extracted. All accountable humans have it within their power to rise above their prejudices and presuppositions sufficiently to arrive at God's truth—if they genuinely wish to do so. There is simply no such thing as "my interpretation" and "your interpretation." There is only God's interpretation and God's meaning—and with diligent, rational study, we can arrive at the truth on any subject that is vital to our spiritual well-being.

Rather than shrug off the conflicting views and positions on various subjects, and rather than dismiss religious differences as hopeless, irresolvable, and irrelevant, we must be about the business of studying and searching God's Book, cautiously refraining from misinterpreting and misusing Scripture. If we will give diligent and careful attention to the task with an honest heart that is receptive to the truth, we can be certain of our ability to come to the knowledge of God's will. The Old Testament is an appropriate place to commence this quest.

## SPEAKING SCHEDULES

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## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



### AP Multimedia Enhancements

In an effort to stay abreast of the latest media advancements, and to accommodate the prevalent practice of younger generations to access information via electronic outlets, AP has “beefed up” its media outreach capabilities. In addition to our Web site’s Multimedia page—which contains over 300 video and audio offerings that may be viewed for free—we have recently enacted two additional evangelistic endeavors.

First, we have created an AP presence on a new ROKU platform. Over 40 videos may be accessed, with more being added daily. Downloading the ROKU channel enables users to stream a host of AP videos on their electronic devices, including our children’s television program *Digger Doug’s Underground*. This one project has the potential of reaching thousands of people with the spiritual principles that AP endeavors to promulgate.

Second, though we created an AP YouTube channel some years ago, we have recently expanded the offerings by adding a considerable number of additional videos that may be viewed for free

worldwide. Simply go to YouTube.com and search for Apologetics Press to access the AP channel.

Also keep in mind that if you subscribe to Amazon Prime, you can access some AP videos, including *America’s Most Pressing Concern* and *Separation of Church and State?* If you view them, be sure to rate them in order to increase the likelihood that Amazon will be receptive to additional AP offerings.

We are certainly living in unusual times so far as the history of the world is concerned. God has enabled the Church to evangelize without ever leaving one’s home country. So much of the world’s population has access to the Web, making it possible to present the Gospel to millions without ever meeting them face-to-face. The work that AP is doing via electronic evangelism is, in itself, well worth the support of Christians who see the need to impact the world for Christ.

**Dave Miller**

See Center Spread  
for More Details